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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING
ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT
OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons
Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic
Minorities

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. The present addendum to the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/509) is submitted to the General Assembly in pursuance of its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, entitled "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities", in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution under the item entitled "Human rights questions".
2. A workshop, organized and sponsored by the Minority Rights Group, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (Roster), was held on 6 October 1993 in New York on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (resolution 47/135, annex). The text of the report of that workshop is annexed hereto.

ANNEX

Report of a workshop on the implementation of the Declaration
on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic,
Religious and Linguistic Minorities

1. The workshop on the implementation of the Declaration of the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities was organized on 6 October 1993 in New York by the Minority Rights Group in cooperation with the United Nations Association of the United States of America and the Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights.

2. Participants welcomed the support of the Secretary-General for the Declaration as expressed in "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277-S/24111, para. 18), and his stress on the need for special sensitivity to the situation of minorities as well as the stability of States. The protection of enhanced minority rights by the United Nations is important and timely. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration could therefore have an important impact on the way the United Nations system responds and organizes itself to address minority protections. This in turn will influence the effective preservation of human rights and international peace and security.

3. Effective implementation of the elements in the Declaration requires that all parts of the United Nations system - including each department and specialized agency - strive for greater cooperation and coordination on matters affecting the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

4. There is a critical need for relevant United Nations statistical and economic departments to carry out a regular collection and dissemination of data on the treatment of different minorities as part of their analyses provided to United Nations operational agencies. Special training may be needed to sensitize personnel on such topics. The information gathered should be disaggregated as appropriate for relevant sectoral work of departments and programmes of the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

5. Means should be established to ensure that information from the specialized agencies, Governments and all appropriate non-governmental agencies should be efficiently and promptly channelled to relevant Secretariat offices to aid in the new early warning and preventive diplomatic efforts. This too will require enhanced coordination among the various branches of the United Nations system and specialized training of field officers about the principles of human and minority rights.

6. To accomplish this, the executive head of each specialized agency and other United Nations departments and programmes should inform field officers that they have specific duties in relation to the Declaration and should prepare, circulate and analyse the results of questionnaires addressed to field officers regarding those duties. Further, the executive heads should explore means to train agency personnel appropriately and should make use of the information and expertise on the rights of persons belonging to minorities that are available from non-governmental organizations. The Department of Public Information

should be encouraged to cooperate actively in such endeavours, to appoint officers to work closely with operational personnel and to allocate funds to the preparation of educational material relevant to the Declaration.

7. Each of the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system should be asked to appoint one or more persons to be responsible for that agency's contribution to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the Declaration in accordance with its article 9 and its fulfilment of paragraph 3 of resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992. Among the responsibilities of such "focal point" should be the assessment and evaluation of the effect of relevant programmes on minority communities.

8. Sensitivity to minority issues is crucially relevant to peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building. There is a special need to train peace-keepers and others involved in national reconciliation programmes about the rights of minorities and other non-discrimination instruments. Special efforts should be made in the field of post-conflict peace-building to develop cross-community programmes.

9. Greater use should be made of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights of the Centre for Human Rights with regard to the rights of persons belonging to minorities, as recommended by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna in 1993. These and other parts of the United Nations system should offer assistance to Governments in protecting diversity.

10. There is a critical need to insure the perspectives and participation of persons belonging to minorities in the deliberations and activities of the United Nations system. Participation should be encouraged in all areas where the interests of minority groups are at stake.

11. One mechanism for raising minority concerns, encouraging participation and addressing grievances should be to establish a working group, perhaps within the human rights programme, to examine questions related to the implementation of the Declaration. The working group should be empowered to receive credible and reliable reports from all appropriate sources, including governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and should have the capacity to respond effectively to credible and reliable information affecting cases and situations involving the rights of persons belonging to minorities and to make urgent inquiries with the aim of the humanitarian resolution of problems. It should promote positive measures to implement the Declaration. The working group could invite persons to present testimony in person and might dispatch members of the group or their representatives to examine situations. The working group should submit regular reports, as information warrants, regarding the implementation of the Declaration, including the occurrence and extent of incidents inconsistent with the provision therein, together with conclusions and recommendations.

12. Annual reporting by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the implementation of the Declaration should become a regular practice.